

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1–5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising platinum supported on a metal oxide particle comprising a core part and a surface layer, wherein:

a molar fraction of cerium and zirconium constituting a ceria-zirconia solid solution in the core part to all the metals in the core part is higher than a molar fraction of the cerium and zirconium constituting a ceria-zirconia solid solution in the surface layer to all the metals in the surface layer; and

a molar fraction of cerium constituting ceria in the surface layer to all the metals in the surface layer is higher than a molar fraction of the cerium constituting the ceria in the core part to all the metals in the core part.

7–8. (Canceled)

9. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A process for producing a metal oxide particle, the process comprising:

providing a sol containing at least a population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles and a population of ceria colloid particles differing in the isoelectric point with each other,

adjusting the pH of said sol to be closer to the isoelectric point of said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles than to the isoelectric point of said population of ceria colloid particles, thereby aggregating said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles,

adjusting the pH of said sol to be closer to the isoelectric point of said population of ceria colloid particles than to the isoelectric point of said population of ceria-

zirconia solid solution colloid particles, thereby aggregating said population of ceria colloid particles onto said population of ceria-zirconia solid colloid particles aggregated, and

drying and firing the obtained aggregate;

wherein:

the metal oxide particle comprises a core part and a surface layer;

a molar fraction of cerium and zirconium constituting a ceria-zirconia solid solution in the core part to all the metals in the core part is higher than a molar fraction of the cerium and zirconium constituting a ceria-zirconia solid solution in the surface layer to all the metals in the surface layer; and

a molar fraction of cerium constituting ceria in the surface layer to all the metals in the surface layer is higher than a molar fraction of the cerium constituting the ceria in the core part to all the metals in the core part.

10. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas catalyst according to claim 6, wherein said core part and said surface layer each comprises a plurality of primary particles.

11. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas catalyst according to claim 6, wherein said surface layer further comprises an oxide of at least one metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals and rare earths.

12. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 9, wherein a difference between the isoelectric points of said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles and said population of ceria colloid particles is 3 or more.

13. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 9, wherein:
the pH of said sol is changed to pass through the isoelectric point of said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles to aggregate said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles; and

the pH of said sol is changed to pass through the isoelectric point of said population of ceria colloid particles to aggregate said population of ceria colloid particles.

14. (Withdrawn) A process for producing an exhaust gas purifying catalyst, the method comprising:

producing metal oxide particles according to the process of claim 9; and

loading platinum on said metal oxide particles.

15. (New) The exhaust gas catalyst according to claim 6, wherein the total molar fraction of cerium and zirconium is at least 85 mol% based on the total molar number of metals in the metal oxide particles.